The University of Texas at El Paso

Spring 2024

DANC 1345
CRN 26863

CONTEMPORARY DANCE I

Class meets: In person
M/W 9am-10:20am
Classroom @ Fox Fine Arts  M201

Instructor: Ashley Kroft
aekroft@utep.edu

**Please, communicate with the instructor via email (not with Blackboard messaging, I will not respond.)

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<tr>
<td>In person</td>
<td>@ Fox Fine Arts M211</td>
<td>Upon Request</td>
<td>Wednesday’s, 10:30am-11:30am</td>
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Course Description

In this course, students will be introduced to the fundamental principles and movement concepts in transnational modern and contemporary dance techniques, practices, and traditions. This course emphasizes somatic awareness, conscious core work, and full corporeal engagement for the accurate articulation of expressive movement and the exploration of one’s own embodied potential and versatility.
DANC 1345 focuses on the following elements: introduction to floor work; introduction to the intersection of contemporary dance and somatic practices; principles of fall and recovery; dynamics of swing, bounce, rebound, and suspension; kinetic energy through the aware dynamic between tension and release; syncopated rhythms in music and embodiment; the role of spiritualities and critical thinking in the practice of contemporary dance.

This course encourages an open, interactive, and energetic environment in which participants, while working with commitment and rigor, feel free to respectfully express curiosities, doubts, and questions.

No prior dance knowledge or experience is needed to enroll and succeed in this course. DANC 1345 is a prerequisite only for dance majors who never took contemporary dance before. Students will be able to progress in their introductory contemporary dance experience in DANC 1346.

**Course Objectives**

- Transmission of the fundamental principles of modern and contemporary dance technique
- Transmission of dynamic principles of body alignment, and anatomical and imaginative awareness
- Balance polarities within the body (release & effort, mobility & stability, internal & external energies), and explore how they can exist separately or harmoniously.
- Discover inherent embodied rhythms while developing a refined sense of musicality.
- Honor creative interests through the implementation of creativity and improvisation.
- Practice self-reflection and personal inquiry as a means to take responsibility for learning and growth, and to discuss movement experiences with nuance and clarity.

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of modern and contemporary dance
- Perform with specificity as well as a sense of creative license and expressivity through phrase work and improvisation
- Demonstrate the ability to consistently execute contemporary dance combinations with an understanding of vocabulary, technique, and creative contribution in individual as well as collaborative work
- Understand, appreciate, and communicate the basics of contemporary dance technique through vocabulary and movement
- Conscious capacity to transfer to one’s own personal practice and everyday life specific contemporary dance principles
Class materials

All the class materials (readings, videos, performances, podcasts, etc.) are uploaded/linked on Blackboard (BB). Students do not need to purchase any textbook.

Online: Reading materials & assignments will be in Online Assignments container on BB. These are assignments of the dates I will not be here. Please mark dates & times in your calendars for assignments due on BB.

Students will need to purchase tickets for in-person performances (See Mandatory Performances section).

Refer to the UTEP Library Dance Studies research guide for important dance sources:
https://libguides.utep.edu/c.php?g=429599&p=2930447

Attendance Policy

In a course that meets twice a week, a student is allowed a maximum of 4 absences in an entire semester, 2 of which require no justification and result in no penalty. A student may use these absences based on personal necessity. The 3rd and 4th absences will result in a drop of ½ letter each in the student’s overall grade. At the 5th absence, regardless of the student’s current course standing or grade, the student automatically fails the course. Three tardees (over 10 minutes late) count as one absence. If you acquired 3 or 4 absences by the end of the semester, I will pull from your participation points.

Exceptions:

- In the event of international bridge closures, exceptions may be made, and make-up course work assigned.
- In case of an injury or extended illness, it is the student’s responsibility to meet with his or her instructor to discuss possible solutions for course continuation or to consider dropping the class.
- In the event of highly unusual or extenuating circumstances, a student may petition the course instructor and department chair for permission to continue in a course.

Extra-Credit Opportunities

TBD & will be posted on BB. Always keep checking BB.
Grading

• **Participation, Attire & Progress/Evidence of Growth:** 200 pts.

Students are expected to be present in class and arrive on time to the best of their possibilities, ready to discuss the assigned materials and engage in practice, activities, and discussions. Students are expected to wear proper attire. Students are also expected to work collaboratively and practice collegiality. Students are expected to demonstrate in practice and discussions the mechanical, conceptual and sensorial understanding of movements and principles, showing evidence of growth throughout the semester. In-class discussions and one-on-one meetings can be useful places to discuss goals, challenges, resistances, roadblocks, finding support from the instructor and the class and therefore to enhance your growth and personal arc over the course of the semester.

• **Online Assignments** (10 points each) 70 possible points

These assignments will be found on BB. Please read instructions carefully before submitting your work.

• **Dance Analysis of Mandatory Performances (2 total)** 20 pts.

Performances will be posted on BB. Please check in often to find two performances that fit with your schedule. If you are in the performance, come talk/email me.

If you cannot afford a ticket, there are ushering opportunities for departmental performances. Students can sign up to usher all departmental productions via the Theatre and Dance Audience Development office (lobby of the Wise Theatre in Fox Fine Arts level 2). Ushering opportunities open one month before opening night. Ushers will see the production for free and must commit to the full time they are needed. If an usher doesn't show up or leaves early, they will not receive credit for seeing the show and will not be allowed to usher for future events.

*Also keep your emails/announcements checked for Tickets in Kind opportunities. Tickets in Kind are free tickets for students, donated by audience members and faculty.

For each event attended, you must write a 1.5 - 2 page MAX, double spaced, size 12 font Times New Roman reflection of the performance in which you are offering an analysis that focuses on the technical principles explored and practiced in class.

For events hosted by the Dinner Theater check: https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/udt/index.html.
Check out the Departmental Events for more information and tickets: https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/theatre-dance/events/index.html

• **Reflection Journal**  
50pts.
Weekly, 1-page, journal entries in which students reflect upon their practice, engagement in corporeality, presence of contemporary dance principles in other dance and everyday-life settings. Please have the date on the page and the entry number. I will check these every Wednesday.

• **Midterm**  
50pts.
As a midterm assessment, students will demonstrate one across the floor and one center combination that has been worked on in class to assess progress of quality in movement we have gone over in class thus far. This will be performed in small groups.

• **Final group project**  
100 pts.
As a final assessment, students in small groups (3-4) will be asked to
a. create movement material utilizing principles and concepts learned and cultivated in class in a 2-2.5 minute phrase (50 pts.)

b. analyze and deconstruct in a group presentation the principles and concepts utilized in the movement composition (50 pts.)

**Grading Scale**

A = 441 - 490+
B = 392 - 440
C = 343 - 391
D = 294 -342
F = < 293
Late Work and Make-ups:

- For every day your assignment is late, you will lose a FULL letter grade.
- Extra Credit will be given out sporadically this semester; keep checking BB for those opportunities if you miss an assignment or participation points.
- Because some of our classes will be online, it would be in your best interest to mark your calendars of when assignments are due!

Important dates:

- Town Hall Day: TBD, Wednesday, Jan. 24th, @ 10:30am (required for all theatre & dance majors/minors)
- Spring Break: March 11th-15th
- Mid-term: Tuesday, March 5th
- Final: Wednesday and/or Thursday, May 1st and/or 2nd
- End of year Dance & Theatre Celebration: Friday, May 10th
- Dates I will be out of town (which means you have an BB online assignment):
  - Feb. 19th, Monday
  - Feb. 26th, Monday
  - Mar. 4th, Monday
  - Mar. 18th, Monday
  - Mar. 25th, Monday
  - Apr. 8th, Monday
  - Apr. 15th, Monday
  - Apr. 22nd, Monday

How to Succeed in This Course

- Attendance is mandatory. Absences need to be announced in advance (unless an emergency occurs) and documented.

- Wear clothing that is comfortable for excessive movement and rolling around on the floor. Soft but not excessively baggy clothes; avoid shorts (they can be uncomfortable for floor work). Long cotton pants and shirts that cover your shoulders are recommended. Jewelry should be removed. Hair should be tied back to avoid movement restrictions. We will dance alternatively barefoot or with socks.

- Cell phones should be turned off or silenced before entering the classroom and should be out of sight. At NO time during class should you check your phone or send a text message.
• Take care of your personal hygiene (such as wearing clean clothes, showering, etc.) since we will be working in close proximity with each other.

• Follow Instructions: Thorough instructions for each assignment are discussed in class and posted on Blackboard, from content to format. FOLLOW THEM. Something is not clear? E-mail the instructor!

• Do your absolute best not to miss the deadlines, as indicated on the syllabus.

• Announcements and e-mails: Announcements are the main form of communication that I have with you as a class. Check them often and read them thoroughly. Check your UTEP email daily. If there are any specifications, changes or alterations to assignments, dates or anything else regarding the class, they will be posted. You are responsible for the information shared there. Check your e-mail account (the one through which you’re enrolled at UTEP which needs to be your miners.utep.edu account) at least once a day.

• If you have questions: ASK the instructor in class and via e-mail.

**Guidance on Artificial Intelligence**

**AI allowed only with prior permission from instructor**

☐ Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is **only allowed with approval from the instructor BEFORE being used**. Without permission, you will be expected to think creatively and critically to complete assignments without assistance from these tools.

☐ If given permission to use any of these tools, students must properly cite and give full credit to the program used upon submission of every relevant assignment. For example, text generated using ChatGPT must be cited:

  Chat-GPT(version). Date of query (year/month/day). “Text of your query.”
  Generated using OpenAI. [https://chat.openai.com/](https://chat.openai.com/)

☐ A short paragraph describing how the tool(s) was/were used for the assignment must be included.

☐ AI allowed with proper acknowledgement

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A short paragraph describing how the tool(s) was/were used for the assignment must be included.

Using AI for brainstorming

Some AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, can be beneficial during the early brainstorming stages of an activity, and you are welcome to explore them for that purpose. However, keep in mind that AI-generated ideas are not your own and may hinder your ability to think critically and creatively about a problem. It is also important to remember that these technologies often “hallucinate” or produce materials and information that are inaccurate or incomplete—even providing false citations for use.

That said, you are not allowed to submit any AI-generated work in this course as your own. If you use any information or materials created by AI technology, you are required to cite it like you would any other source. Consider how this will affect your credibility as a writer and scholar before doing so. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

Free use of AI without acknowledgement

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, including generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is permitted in this class. Students must include a short paragraph, with each relevant assignment, explaining how the tool was used.

Technology Requirements

The course utilizes Blackboard as the main platform. You need to have access to a device that allows you to enter Blackboard (better a computer/laptop to watch videos), to a printer, to webcam and microphone to record and upload audio-visual materials.

All the class materials are uploaded/linked on Blackboard. Sometimes, if a video doesn’t work or a page doesn’t open, it’s because you need to download or update a software or update/change browser. Check that your device’s hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. If you encounter technical difficulties of any kind, contact the Help Desk at https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/

If you cannot have access to technological means for whatever reasons, contact the instructor ASAP to negotiate an accommodation.

If you do not know how to use Blackboard – contact Tech Support immediately. Do not wait until you do not understand until you are having problems. You can go in person to Room 300 at the UTEP Library or contact the Help Desk via email at helpdesk@utep.edu, or by phone 747-5257. Hours are M-F 7a-8p, Sat 9a-10p and Sun 12-4p.
Policy on Protection of Personal and Intellectual Content

All the materials—written, audio, and visual—shared within this course remain within this course. To store, post, or share by any means and/or for personal use or public consumption any course material (assigned or produced within and for the course) without explicit authorization by the subjects involved is illegal. Make sure to ask for permission in case. You can share on your social media your own materials if the only person that appears or the only author is you. If you want to share content that includes or is co-authored with other classmates, you need to contact them and the instructor via e-mail (utilizing the UTEP account) to discuss the authorization.

Policy on Sensitive Subject Matter

The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing on stage. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects that may trigger specific emotions, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. As I will respect your individual’s rights to choose what performances and topics you can engage with, I expect all our discussions and reflections to be conducted in a respectful and professional matter.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty

Any form of academic dishonesty: cheating, plagiarizing, or taking a test for another student is considered a very serious matter at UTEP. Our library webpage provides good information on what UTEP considers Academic Dishonesty and what steps the university takes in such cases. Please review this information at: http://libraryweb.utep.edu/research/plagiarism.php. Refer also to the Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs.

Policy on Copyright and Fair Use

Some of the materials in this course are copyrighted. Copying of textbooks is not “fair use” under the Copyright Act. Your cooperation is expected. The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

Students with Disabilities Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you
have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

Pregnant and Parenting Students; Title IX

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

Campus Sources of Student Support

- Center for Accommodations and Support Services https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/
- Student Success Helpdesk https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-helpdesk.html
- Miner Learning Center https://www.utep.edu/mlc/
- University Writing Center https://www.utep.edu/uwc/
- Counseling and Psychological Services https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/
- Students are encouraged to speak with professionals from UTEP’s Counseling and Psychological Services on a walk-in basis from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in Union Building West, Room 202. In addition, the Miners Talk Crisis Line at 915-747-5302 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- UTEP Title IX (Anti-Sexual Harassment and Anti-Sexual Violence) Office: https://www.utep.edu/titleix
- Need more dance in your life? Join the UTEP student organization DESERT DANCE. E-mail desertdanceutep@gmail.com